

10/590,748

PATENT**REMARKS****Pending Claims**

Upon entry of this amendment, claims 1-25 are pending. Entry of the above-noted amendments to the claims is respectfully requested.

Claim Objections

Claims 2, 13, 14, and 22 are amended to properly format the superscripts. Claim 21 is amended to address the Examiner's objection.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. §112

Claim 1, 2, 10-11 and 17 are amended to address the range issue.

Claim 1, 7, 9, 11, 21 and 22 are amended to address the issues raised by the Examiner.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. §102

The Examiner has rejected claims 1-23 as being anticipated by Schmidt et al, U.S. Pat. No. 6,893,525. Schmidt is directed to a method of making an embossed air-laid absorbent sheet that comprises not only cellulose fibers of natural origin and super-absorbent polymers but also synthetic fibers as listed in column 6, lines 3-13. In particular, low melting fibers are envisaged that would support bonding of the fibrous web.

The Applicant's claimed web, in contrast, is directed to a fibrous web that does not contain any synthetic fiber but only cellulose fibers of natural origin and super-absorbent polymers as absorbing particles or fibers that do not contribute to the fibrous web as such.

The problem to be solved by the claimed device and method is to avoid the dusting of such fibrous web based on natural fibers, exclusively. This object is achieved by moistening the fibrous web with a low level of latex binders so that the areal weight

Page 6 of 7

10/590,748

PATENT

of the latex binders in the dry state is less than 5 g/m². See, for example, para [0005]. This is recited in claim 23. Independent claim 1 recites that dust due to fluff is less than 0.1% of the dust due to fluff of an untreated web. Schmidt's web, which includes both natural and synthetic fibers, does not possess these features.

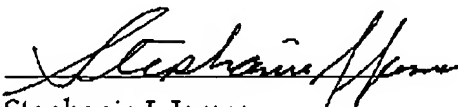
Claims 1-7, 13-16, 21 and 23 are rejected as being anticipated by Callahan, U.S. Pat. No. 4,135,024. A fundamental difference between the method described in US 4,135,024 and the Applicant's claimed web-making method is that embossing the fiber layer in Applicant's method is done prior to moistening the fibrous web. Callahan, in contrast, describes simultaneously embossing and applying fluid. Simultaneous application of fluid and embossing leads to a full penetration of the fibrous web by the binder fluid and leads to the fully compressed densified regions 26 in Callahan that are to be avoided by using instead the Applicant's claimed method. By applying the latex binder only after embossing the fibrous web, a different structure is achieved that does not exhibit densified areas like those in Callahan.

CONCLUSION

All of the claims remaining in this application should now be seen to be in condition for allowance. The prompt issuance of a notice to that effect is solicited.

Respectfully submitted,
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By its attorneys:

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